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Maria Luck-Davies  
Headteacher  
Bradfield Primary School  
Heath Road  
Bradfield  
Manningtree  
CO11 2UZ

Dear Mrs Luck-Davies

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Bradfield Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 30 September 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in May 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- ensure that the school's action plan addresses explicitly all the improvement points detailed in the previous inspection report; extend the action plan to cover more than one term; and improve it by adding milestones and deadlines for actions and for monitoring
- increase the impact of marking by ensuring that teachers focus on telling pupils how to improve their work and that they provide an opportunity, at the beginning of each lesson, for pupils to reflect on and respond to what has been written
- address the development points from the recent review of governance so that governors are better able to understand performance data and to hold the school to account.

## **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, your senior teacher, six members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school action plan was evaluated and you took me on a tour of the school. You shared with me the results of this year's Key Stage 2 national tests.

## **Context**

One teacher left the school at the end of the academic year. Two newly qualified teachers joined the school in September, one filling a vacancy that existed when the school was last inspected. An additional teaching assistant has also been appointed. There have been no changes to the governing body.

## **Main findings**

The proportion of pupils who attained at least the expected Level 4 in the Key Stage 2 tests improved in all areas this year and is now in line with the national average in reading and writing, and above it in spelling and grammar. The proportion who attained above the expected level increased in all areas and is now above the national average in reading and writing. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is in line with the national average. The school's own data show that the proportion of pupils who made at least the expected amount of progress was similar to the national average.

The school's action plan is clear and includes a range of appropriate activities. The termly overview provides a useful timeline to ensure that you remain on track. The plan includes many of the improvement points from the last inspection but these are neither thorough nor explicit enough. For example, although the plan includes actions to improve teaching, it does not show explicitly how the school will 'accelerate pupils progress by reinforcing the understanding of phonics in Key Stage 2 to help with the ongoing development of reading'. The plan needs to be revised to ensure that its key priorities match those from the last inspection precisely in order to ensure that school improvement is firmly focused on the most important areas.

The plan covers this school term in detail but does not look beyond it. You now need to take a longer-term, strategic view of the school's journey to become good and extend the plan to cover a more suitable period of time (of up to five terms). Deadlines and milestones should be added to the plan and monitoring activity made clearer so that you know what you expect to have been done, by when and how you will know whether it has been successful.

Progress following the inspection in May was slow initially because of the high turnover of staff. You rightly focused your attention on establishing a full teaching team for September, reorganising subject leadership and improving interventions for

identified pupils. The pace of school improvement has clearly increased since the start of this academic year and this now needs to be maintained.

You have observed teaching throughout the school and were able to show me ways that teachers have responded to the development points you have given them. Staff have worked together to scrutinise pupils' work and highlight improvements that need to be made. You have set a date for a further staff meeting to check that these changes have been made. All teachers are using the school's new marking system but this is not yet having a noticeable impact on improving pupils' work. Teachers now need to ensure that marking tells pupils how to improve their work and check that they are always given the opportunity to respond to the feedback they are given. You recently introduced a new scheme for teaching mathematics and are monitoring its implementation closely. You have identified that some teachers are over-reliant on the scheme and are addressing this issue.

The school's leadership has been strengthened by the appointment of a senior teacher. Subject leadership responsibilities are now shared with the school's experienced teachers. It is too soon to measure the impact of these changes. An external review of governance was carried out two weeks ago and a number of development points were given. It is important that these points are actioned promptly so that the governing body is better able to hold the school to account.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

The support provided by the local authority has been remiss because you were not provided with a mentor when you took up your post, even though this is your first headship. You were not provided with sufficient support to write the school's action plan prior to my visit. The local authority does not provide advisor support and staff training free of charge and you say that this has limited the school's opportunities to access external support because of the budgetary constraints associated with being a small school. The school receives termly visits from the local authority and these will continue. A review of governance was recently carried out but it is too soon to measure its impact. You are part of a small schools cluster group and you find this to be useful and valuable support.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Essex local authority.

Yours sincerely  
Wendy Varney

**Her Majesty's Inspector**